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PRICES DECLINE AT AUCTION OF UNITED STATES FUR SEAL SKINS

A decline in prices characterized the semiannual auction of Government-owned fur seal skins at St. Louis on October 18, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

A total of 26,590 skins, products of the sealing industry administered by the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service on the Pribilof Islands of Alaska, brought \$2,045,326. This compares with 25,038 skins sold for \$2,301,646 at the April sale.

The grand average for all skins sold for the account of the United States Government was \$76.92, representing a 13.6 percent decline from the average for the spring auction.

Of the Alaska skins, 14,790 were dyed "Matara" (brown), 1,743 were "Safari" brown (a lighter brown), and 10,057 were blacks. The Matara skins brought an average of \$73.49, a decline of 11.7 percent from the April auction. The Safari skins sold for an average of \$52.97, a decline of 9.2 percent. The black skins averaged \$86.12, a decline of 16 percent.

Because sizes and qualities of skins differ somewhat from one auction to another, the comparisons must be considered relative.

A total of 920 Matara-processed skins, representing part of the United States share of skins taken off the Japanese coast in 1952 as part of an international research program, averaged \$24.31, for a total of \$22,362.50.

In addition to the United States-owned skins, 5,442 Cape of Good Hope fur seal skins were sold for the account of the Government of the Union of South Africa at an average of \$26.64, a decline of 16.5 percent, and 800 Uruguay fur seal skins were sold for the Uruguayan Government at a \$27.84 average.

The next sale is scheduled for April 4, 1955.

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